

**The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:**

**Listing of Claims:**

1-63. (Canceled)

64. (Currently amended) An isolated DNA encoding a protein ~~according to any one of the following (a) or (b):~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ (a) a protein comprising the sequence of amino acids shown in Seq. SEQ ID No. 40, NO:40~~

~~(b) a protein comprising a sequence of amino acids wherein one or more of amino acids are deleted, substituted, or added in the sequence of amino acids shown in Seq. ID No. 40, and having the activity of improving tolerance at least against salt stress.~~

65. (Currently Amended) An isolated DNA comprising ~~part or all of~~ the sequence of bases shown in Seq. SEQ ID No. 39 NO:39, or its complementary sequence.

66. (Currently amended) An isolated DNA which hybridizes with the DNA according to claim 65 under stringent conditions for hybridization at 42°C and washing treatment ~~using~~ with a ~~washing~~ buffer containing 1XSSC, 0.1% SDS at 42°C, and encodes a protein having the activity of improving tolerance at least against salt stress.

67-113. (Canceled)

114. (Previously presented) A vector comprising the DNA according to any one of claims 64-66.

115. (Currently amended) A transformed host cell obtained by introducing the vector according to claim 114 to a host cell.

116. (Currently amended) A transformed host cell according to claim 115, wherein the host cell is a plant cell.

117. (Currently amended) A method for producing a protein having the activity of improving environmental stress tolerance, wherein the transformed host cell[[s]] according to claim 115 is cultured, and a recombinant protein is collected from the transformed host cell[[s]] or the supernatant of the cultured liquid.

118-120. (Canceled)

121. (Previously presented) A transgenic plant obtained by introducing the DNA according to any one of claims 64 to 66 to a plant cell and regenerating a plant from the plant cell by dividing, proliferating and redifferentiating the plant cell.

122. (Previously presented) A transgenic plant obtained by introducing the vector according to claim 114 to a plant cell, and regenerating a plant from the plant cell by dividing, proliferating and redifferentiating the plant cell.

123-124. (Canceled)

125. (Previously presented) A transgenic plant part which is derived from the transgenic plant according to claim 121.